

# SB 538

**Measure Title:**

RELATING TO THE STATE FIRE COUNCIL

**Report Title:**

State Fire Council Package

**Description:**

Establishes full-time equivalent staff positions for the state fire council to accomplish its duties and responsibilities.



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**  
**State Fire Council**  
830 Punchbowl Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

February 10, 2009

The Honorable Will Espero, Chair  
Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs  
The State Senate  
State Capitol, Room 207  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Espero:

Subject: S.B. 538 Relating to the State Fire Council

I am Kenneth G. Silva, Chair of the State Fire Council (SFC) and Fire Chief of the Honolulu Fire Department (HFD). The SFC and the HFD support S.B. 538, which proposes to allow the SFC to hire personnel to accomplish its duties and responsibilities; however, Section 1 of this bill must be amended as follows:

"The purpose of this Act is to allow the state fire council to hire personnel to fulfill its statutory responsibilities."

As written, Section 1 incorrectly states that fireworks license fees will provide funding for the positions. The fees collected from cigarette manufacturers for a reduced ignition propensity cigarette program will be an eventual funding source amounting to approximately \$375,000 triennially.

The SFC, comprised of the four county Fire Chiefs, was created in 1979 to replace the State Fire Marshal's Office, which was a fully-funded state agency.

Under the present organization, the SFC primarily uses county fire department personnel to accomplish council duties, thus depriving county fire departments of the time and services of its members. These duties include amending and adopting the state fire code, pursuing and administering federal grants, and implementing and administering a statewide reduced ignition propensity cigarette program. The SFC's staff consists of only one part-time person funded by the State Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, to which the SFC is administratively attached. In addition, the SFC

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is a member of the State Building Code Council and participates in the state building code adoption process; coordinates statewide training, data collection; and corresponds with national organizations on statewide fire issues.

This bill would greatly increase the SFC's productivity and benefit communities and fire departments statewide.

The SFC and the HFD urge your committee's support on the passage of S.B. 538.

Should you have any questions, please call HFD Legislative Liaison Lloyd Rogers at 723-7171.

Sincerely,



KENNETH G. SILVA  
Chair

KGS/LR:bh

Bernard P. Carvalho, Jr.  
Mayor



Robert F. Westerman  
Fire Chief

John T. Blalock  
Deputy Fire Chief

COUNTY OF KAUAI  
Fire Department  
Mo'ikeha Building  
4444 Rice Street, Suite 295  
Lihu'e, Kaua'i, Hawaii 96766

February 9, 2009

The Honorable Will Espero, Chair  
Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs  
The State Senate  
State Capitol, Room 207  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Espero:

**Subject: S.B. 538 Relating to the State Fire Council**

I am Robert F. Westerman, member of the State Fire Council (SFC) and Fire Chief of the Kauai Fire Department (KFD). The SFC and the KFD support S.B. 538, which proposes to allow the SFC to hire two (2) staff personnel to accomplish its duties and responsibilities.

Section 1 of this bill needs to be amended to read:

"The purpose of this Act is to allow the state fire council to hire staff personnel to fulfill its statutory responsibilities."

Section 1 incorrectly states that fireworks license fees will provide funding for the positions. However, the fees collected from cigarette manufacturers for a reduced ignition propensity cigarette program will be an eventual funding source amounting to approximately \$375,000 every three (3) years.

The SFC, comprised of the four county fire chiefs, was created in 1979 to replace the State Fire Marshal's Office, which was a fully-funded state agency.

Under the present organization, the SFC primarily uses county fire department personnel to accomplish council duties, thus depriving the county fire departments of the time and services of its members. These duties include amending and adopting the state fire code, pursuing and administering federal grants, and implementing and administering a statewide reduced ignition propensity cigarette program. The SFC staff currently consists of only one part-time person funded by the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, to which the SFC is administratively attached. In addition, the SFC is a member of the State Building Code Council and participates in the state building code adoption process. The SFC also coordinates statewide training, data collection, and corresponds with national organizations on statewide fire issues. This bill would greatly increase productivity of the SFC and benefit communities and all fire departments statewide.

The SFC and the KFD urge your committee's support on the passage of S.B. 538.

Should you have any questions, please call me at 241-4980.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Westerman".

Robert F. Westerman  
Fire Chief

RFW/LR:cz